

## 2.0 SOME COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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Many municipalities have common questions of MaineDOT. We've included many of them in this section and have provided appropriate responses as well.

### State-Related

**Q. How do I find out who is responsible for maintaining a particular highway in my town?**

A. Call the Regional Manager at your Regional Office. See [section 1.4](#) for telephone numbers and the map on the following page.

**Q. The state road in our town needs improvement, not just a maintenance paving job. How do we get it done?**

A. Call the Regional Manager at your local Regional Office. The Manager will be able to tell you if any work is scheduled. If none is scheduled, the municipal office can contact the Bureau of Planning at 624-3300. Also when MaineDOT sends its biennial municipal solicitation form to each town, it's extremely important to fill it out and send it in.

**Q. What's a "State Aid" road?**

A. From a maintenance perspective, a "State Aid" road in a non-compact town is a State road which is plowed/sanded by the municipality and maintained in the summer by the MaineDOT. A "State Highway" is maintained year round by the MaineDOT. From a classification perspective, a "State Aid" road is usually a "Collector" road, which feeds into the Arterial Highway network.

**Q. When a town has an ordinance that regulates Official Business Directional Signs, how will the MaineDOT control and place the signs?**

A. The MaineDOT will, when there is a difference between their regulations and the town regulations, use the stricter of the two. See [section 3.6](#) for more background information.

**Q. A road sign was knocked down during an accident at the intersection of a town-road and a state-highway. Who should I contact in order to get the sign replaced?**

A. Call the Regional Manager at your local Regional Office. Unless your municipality has taken over all maintenance responsibilities for state-highways, the MaineDOT will replace the sign. The Regional Manager will be able to tell you if the town is responsible. See [section 1.4](#) for telephone numbers and [section 3.6](#) for more background information.

**Q. Can we take advantage of state purchases of items such as culverts, signs, paving, and graders?**

A. Yes, any political sub-division (town, city, county, school district, water or sewer

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district), is entitled to take advantage of the bid prices from state purchasing of supplies, material, and equipment only if the vendor has agreed to this arrangement. Call the State Bureau of Purchases at (207) 624-7340, to get a list of the contracts for municipalities. The list shows what items are available, and is updated regularly. See section 4.2 for more information. The items are also on the website at: <http://www.maine.gov/purchases/agencyinfo/index.htm>

**Q. Is there a source of used equipment that municipalities can tap into?**

A. Yes. State surplus property, ranging from graders and dump-trucks to computers and furniture, is available. The property is auctioned twice a year, and municipalities have the chance to offer a price on items before they go to public bid. A range of the smaller items, such as chairs, desks, and computers, is also available more frequently at the Central Warehouse on Leighton Rd in Augusta. For more information, call the Surplus Property Section, at (207) 287-3641 or see <http://www.maine.gov/bgs/centralserv/surplus/index.htm>. See section 4.2 for more information.

**Q. There is a very dangerous curve on a state-road in our town. Who do we talk to get the situation remedied?**

A. Call the Regional Traffic Engineer at your local Regional Office. He will be able to examine the crash accident statistics for the location in question and visit the site. If improvement of the curve is warranted, he will recommend that it should be included in the Department's work program. See section 1.4 for telephone numbers.

**Q. Our town feels that the present State Highway System Designation of a road has changed, and would like to request a review of the road. Who do we call?**

A. Call Community Services Division at (207) 624-3270. The State Highway System designations are State Highway, State-Aid Highway, and Townway. Town officials should submit a request in writing to the Commissioner of MaineDOT.

**Q. The police department needs updated node reference maps for identifying accident locations within our town. Where can I get these maps?**

A. Call the Mapping Division at (207) 624-3300, and request node reference maps of your town.

**Q. Someone wants to put a driveway or entrance and culvert onto a rural state or state aid road, how do they do that?**

A. Call the Regional Traffic Engineer and see section 3.3.6. They will need to get a State permit and follow current access management regulations as shown here: <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/planning-process-programs/access-mngmnt.php>

**Q. A culvert is blocked on what I believe is a state-maintained road. Who do I call?**

- A. Call the Regional Manager at your local Regional Office. See section 1.4 for telephone numbers.
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## **Town roads**

**Q. Our town uses so-called "state rates" in its contracts for highway work. Where can we get up-to-date rate information?**

- A. Rate information is available through the Maine Local Roads Center at (207) 624-3270 or on its website at <http://www.maine.gov/mdot/laborrates.php>. "State rates" are a standard set of equipment and operator hiring rates. Many municipalities use the rates to prepare cost estimates for projects.

**Q. A stretch of town-road needs reconstruction. Who in the MaineDOT can advise the town on how to proceed?**

- A. Call the Maine Local Roads Center, (207) 624-3270, to talk about the problem and options for reconstruction. Staff from the Center or personnel from the local Maintenance Division Office may be able to come out, take a look, and offer some advice. Call the Center or the Regional Manager at your local Maintenance Division Office. See section 1.4 for telephone numbers.

**Q. Our town needs a road maintenance plan. How do we develop one?**

- A. Call the Maine Local Roads Center, at (207) 624-3270. The Center offers training specifically in managing local roads from the basic concepts through to a very effective computer-aided Road Surface Management System (RSMS). See section 3.11 for more information.

**Q. We need an ordinance for local road design. How do we find acceptable standards and put them into an effective ordinance?**

- A. Call the Maine Local Roads Center at (207) 624-3270. The Center is active in promoting appropriate construction standards for local roads, so as to ensure the wise investment of town and state moneys for their construction and maintenance. The staff can help with reviewing and advising on new or existing ordinances.

**Q. Someone has put up a brick mailbox/concrete post in the right-of-way of a town-road. How do we get it removed?**

- A. Such a fixture constitutes a "deadly fixed object" and a potential town liability. Call the Maine Local Roads Center at (207) 624-3270 or the Maine Municipal Association at (800) 452-8786. The Maine Local Roads Center has a handbook on the correct installation of mailboxes which includes the US Post Office requirements and a sample letter to send to the homeowner.

**Q. Our town "posts" roads in the spring, but we are not sure we are doing it properly. We want to protect our roads, but on the other hand, we do not want to hamper the businesses in town. Who can give us guidance?**

- A. Both the Maine Municipal Association and the Maine Local Roads Center have information on posting roads. The Center has an information package that includes what the law says; how to go about posting roads; appropriate signs; and how to enforce the regulations. Call Maine Local Roads Center at (207) 624-3270, or Maine Municipal Association at (800) 452-8786.
- Q. It has been determined that the town is presently maintaining roads that are designated Private Ways. Is this legal?**
- A. If you're plowing/maintaining private roads, STOP! If you're not, DON'T START! For additional information, please contact Maine Local Roads Center at (207) 624-3270 or Maine Municipal Association at (207) 623-8428.

## **Traffic issues**

- Q. We have a speeding problem on one of our roads. How can we stop it?**
- A. Very often, speeding is an enforcement problem. Reducing the speed limit, in the absence of increased enforcement efforts, is usually ineffective. However, there are situations where certain local roads can be altered to incorporate features that will slow traffic. Larger, brighter signs, road striping, flashing lights, rumble strips, pavement grooving, speed humps, and road narrowing are some of the techniques known as traffic calming that have been used successfully in various situations. Call the Maine Local Roads Center at (207) 624-3270 for more information.
- Q. What traffic signs should a town buy, and how far from the hazard should they be placed?**
- A. For advice, call the Regional Traffic Engineer at your local Regional Office. [See Section 1.4](#) for telephone numbers.
- Q. Where do we get information about striping town-roads?**
- A. Call the Maine Local Roads Center, at (207) 624-3270. The staff will be able to help you with the standards to follow for striping. The Regional Traffic Engineer may help with particular field questions on striping certain roads. [See Section 1.4](#) for telephone numbers.
- Q. We need traffic volume counts on our roads. Where do we get this information, and can someone help us do our own counts?**
- A. For traffic volume data, call the Traffic Monitoring Section of the Traffic Engineering Division at (207) 624-3620. This section will be able to give you the most up-to-date information available, and advise you about traffic data and counts.
- Q. Our town has a problem with vehicles not slowing for pedestrians in crosswalks. Can the town put up portable barrels or cones to require vehicles to stop for pedestrians?**

- A. Although many of these devices may “work” it’s important to realize that they could lead to serious, complicated, liability problems for the town. Before you place any devices in the middle of a road, contact the Maine Local Roads Center at (207) 624-3270. Traffic control on all public ways is governed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). [See section 3.9](#)
- Q. How do I know if a particular development being proposed at the Town Planning Board Meeting requires a D.E.P. Site Location of Development permit or a D.O.T. Traffic permit, or both?**
- A. [See section 3.3.7 or 4.4.5](#). If the proposed development creates an unrevegetated surface area which results in having 3 or more acres covered by the footprint of buildings, parking areas, roads, sidewalks, etc., then a D.E.P. Site Location of Development Permit would be required. If the proposed development generates 100 or more “passenger car equivalents” (PCE’s) at peak hour, then a Traffic permit would be required. For those development projects that are expansions of existing facilities, then only the additional trips at peak hour that occur after July 1, 1997 would be counted and applied to the 100 trip threshold. Call the Division Traffic Engineer for questions and advice.
- Q. How do I know whether or not a proposed development generates 100 “passenger car equivalents” or more at peak hour?**
- A. Call the MaineDOT Regional Traffic Engineer and ask him / her to look up the anticipated trip generation for the proposed land use. [See section 1.4](#) for telephone numbers. He / she will check the copy of the Institute of Traffic Engineer’s (I.T.E.) Trip Generation book and estimate the number of trips expected to be generated at peak hour.
- Q. How do I get a copy of the I.T.E. “Trip Generation” book?**
- A. MaineDOT uses the latest edition to calculate anticipated trip generation for proposed development projects. This book has trip generation rates for over 120 different land use categories. The book costs \$165.00 and is available through I.T.E., 525 School Street S.W. Suite 140, Washington, DC, 20024-2729. Telephone number (202) 554-8050 or Fax (202) 863-5486.

## **Funding**

- Q. What are a municipality's options for funding a transportation project?**
- A. The options depend on the location of the proposed project to a great extent, and the type of project. A wise course of action would be to discuss the project with staff at the Bureau of Planning (207) 624-3300, or at the Office of Freight Transportation (207) 624-3560 or the Office of Passenger Transportation at (207) 624-3250, at an early stage in the development of the project. [See section 4.1](#) for more information.
- Q. Did the Urban Rural Initiative Program (URIP) change how much money a town gets from the State or who maintains which roads?**

A. Yes and No. Every town receives at least the same amount as FY 99, or a higher amount. No maintenance changes occurred.

**Q. How much money will we be receiving in Urban/Rural Initiative Program (URIP) this year?**

A. For up to date information on this, call the Community Services Division at (207) 624-3270.

**Q. My town / city auditor needs verification of the funds we received from the URIP Who do I contact to receive verification of the funds received over the past year?**

A. This information is available upon a written request to the Community Services Division

**Q. I understand that our Town is now going to be partly responsible for repair costs on a State Aid road going through town. Is that true ?**

A. Under the new URIP policy developed jointly by MMA and MaineDOT in 1999, a town will be responsible for 1/3 of the costs for capital improvements on State Aid MINOR collector roads in town. MaineDOT will provide the remaining 2/3 and will retain the maintenance responsibilities. [See Section 4.1.1.0](#)